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Security Council

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Letter dated 12 January 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Zambia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

On instruction from my Government, I wish to refer to the letter dated 28 December 2000 addressed to you by the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations, in which it was alleged that the Zambian Government granted use of its territory by the Rwandan Patriotic Army and armed members of the União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA) to launch attacks on Katanga Province of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The said letter, among other things, expressed "deep concern at the unfriendly attitude of the Zambian authorities". My Government had hoped that the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo would, based on verifiable facts, have the courage to retract the allegations. This has not been done.

The Government of the Republic of Zambia wishes to inform the Security Council that:

(a) Zambia has been and will continue to remain neutral with regard to the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo;

(b) Zambia respects and will continue to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all its neighbours, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo;

(c) Zambia maintains warm and cordial relations with the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is in this context that when information first surfaced alleging use of Zambian territory by the Rwandese army and armed UNITA elements, the Congolese Government dispatched a Special Envoy to Zambia on 28 December 2000, to discuss the matter. At the suggestion and with the facilitation of the Zambian Government, the Congolese Special Envoy and his delegation visited the area concerned in the northern part of Zambia to, among other things, verify the allegations;

(d) On 4 January 2001, the Presidents of Zambia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo held a meeting in Ndola, Zambia, during which the allegations were discussed, among other issues of common interest to both countries. The two Presidents concluded that there was no truth to the allegations,

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and President Laurent Desiré Kabila assured his Zambian counterpart that the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo would formally apologize to the Security Council and withdraw the letter which was circulated by the Chargé d'affaires;

(e) It is in the context of these relations that Zambia has been receiving and looking after refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In addition, Zambia has, from time to time, received armed personnel from various parties displaced by the war in the Congo, including Congolese soldiers. Zambia makes every effort to repatriate these forces to their countries of origin, except for those who voluntarily renounce their military status and freely choose not to go back to their countries. As the Security Council may be aware, the most recent repatriation of combatants from Zambia involved about 3,000 Congolese soldiers over the New Year weekend.

My Government feels compelled to issue this letter because the letter dated 10 January 2001 from the Chargé d'affaires of the Permanent Mission of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2001/29) does not, in our view, amount to the unconditional withdrawal of his letter of 28 December 2000, which President Kabila had promised would be done. Furthermore, my Government wishes to inform the Security Council that the said letter does not correctly reflect the spirit, tone, and content of what was discussed by the Heads of State of Zambia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo at their recent meeting in Ndola.

I would be most grateful if you could circulate this letter as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Prof. Mwelwa C. **Musambachime**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative